

# A Provider Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Gender Competency for Family Planning Services

## Module D: Engaging Men and Boys as Partners

### Data for Impact

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## Overview

This document contains one of six modules (A–F), each of which are related to one domain of gender competency. In each module, providers respond to statements that represent knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the domain. For each statement, providers indicate if they “Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree” with the statement. Select modules can be administered on their own, or as part of a holistic assessment. The background and development of the provider self-assessment tool is described in detail in the parent document.

The tool includes three sections for each module as follows:

- The first section is the **Statement and Response Form**. This is the form used by providers to document their responses to each statement. The form includes the statements that relate to the domain, and the response options (strongly agree—strongly disagree). Providers review the statement and select one response for each statement.
- The second section is the **Answer Key**, which shows the ideal response for each statement and a point value for each response. Providers write the point value for their response in the “Your Score” column of the answer key and sum their score for the module.
- The third section is a **Discussion Guide**, which provides a brief explanation about why certain responses demonstrate gender competency. It also summarizes main points about the domains and includes self-reflection and group discussion questions.

This provider self-assessment tool aligns with HRH2030 and USAID’s Office of Population and Reproductive Health’s gender-competency framework and eLearning for family planning service providers. A free, self-paced online training program can be accessed at <https://chemonics.com/resource/defining-and-advancing-gender-competent-family-planning-service-providers/>.

## Statement and Response Form

Consider each statement and whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it. Write a check in the box next to your response in the column to the right.	
Statement	Check the box with your response here
D1. Beliefs about gender, including how men and women should act, can lead to unequal control over family planning decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D2. There are ways to include men in family planning counseling without compromising a woman's choice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D3. Male partners should also be responsible for family planning by using a method themselves or by providing support to their partner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D4. In some cases, including men in family planning services can support continued method use.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D5. I should only invite a woman's partner to their family planning session if she wants me to.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D6. Family planning should address myths about how method use affects fertility, sexual pleasure, and behavior for women and men.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D7. Men can be users of contraceptive methods themselves—they are not only for women.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D8. There is no point talking to men about family planning unless I have condoms at the clinic.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D9. Men should be aware of all forms of contraception, even though most methods are used by women.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D10. Holding community dialogues with men about family planning is important to support family planning services.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D11. Talking with male community leaders about family planning is important to support family planning services.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree

D12. In some cases, including men in family planning decisions can improve the couple's satisfaction with method choice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
D13. I can counsel male clients about vasectomy as a contraceptive method and provide referrals if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree

## Answer Key

Step 1: Use your responses from the “statement and response form” to match your response choice with a point value. Then write your point value for the statement in the “your score” column.		
Statement	Points	Your score
D1. Beliefs about gender, including how men and women should act, can lead to unequal control over family planning decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D2. There are ways to include men in family planning counseling without compromising a woman’s choice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D3. Male partners should also be responsible for family planning by using a method themselves or by providing support to their partner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D4. In some cases, including men in family planning services can support continued method use.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D5. I should only invite a woman’s partner to their family planning session if she wants me to.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D6. Family planning should address myths about how method use affects fertility, sexual pleasure, and behavior for women and men.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D7. Men can be users of contraceptive methods themselves—they are not only for women.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D8. There is no point talking to men about family planning unless I have condoms at the clinic.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 4	
D9. Men should be aware of all forms of contraception, even though most methods are used by women.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D10. Holding community dialogues with men about family planning is important to support family planning services.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D11. Talking with male community leaders about family planning is important to support family planning services.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
D12. In some cases, including men in family planning decisions can improve the couple’s satisfaction with method choice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	

D13. I can counsel male clients about vasectomy as a contraceptive method and provide referrals if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree = 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree = 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree = 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree = 1	
<b>Total score</b>		
<p><b>Step 2:</b> Add the values for each statement to find your total score (sum value from statements 1–13). Be sure to note that for the statements highlighted in blue, the point values are higher for “disagree” and “strongly disagree” (3 and 4 respectively). For all other statements, the highest point values are for “strongly agree” and “agree.”</p> <p><b>Step 3:</b> Compare your total score to the values in the table below to see if you have high, medium, or low gender competency in this domain.</p> <p><b>Step 4:</b> Review the discussion guide which explains the ideal response for each statement. To strengthen competency in this area, complete the eLearning course <a href="https://chemonics.com/resource/defining-and-advancing-gender-competent-family-planning-service-providers/">https://chemonics.com/resource/defining-and-advancing-gender-competent-family-planning-service-providers/</a></p>		

Module	Maximum possible score	High gender competency	Medium gender competency	Low gender competency
D. Engaging Men and Boys as Partners	52	47–52	42–46	Equal to or less than 41

## Discussion Guide

This guide will help you reflect on your experience answering statements about engaging men and boy as partners. First, please consider the following personal reflection questions.

- What statements were confusing to you? Why?
- What statements did you answer and then second-guess your response? Why?
- What statements touched on practices that you already do when providing family planning services?

The statements in this module assess your ability to engage men and boys as partners in family planning. Providers should recognize that men and boys can be involved in family planning as supportive partners to women, and as potential users of family planning themselves. Provider skills related to engaging men and boys can be demonstrated with men, women, and couples, but should always be anchored in women's preferences and consent.

### Three Key Takeaways from this Module are:

1. Men and boys may have less background knowledge about reproductive health than women and girls. Gender-competent providers should be able to explain to men and boys, as well as women and girls, how methods work even if it requires more time and attention to reproduction, contraceptive methods, and family planning. It is especially important that providers can help men/boys and women/girls understand how to use condoms. Further, providers should be able to describe and counsel on both tubal ligation and vasectomy, as well as methods requiring active cooperation of both men and women like the Standard Days Method. When a man understands contraception, including side effects, he can provide more support to his partner.
2. A gender-competent provider should be able to engage men and boys without infringing on a woman's agency to make her own family planning choice (including the choice to make decisions with her partner or to ask the provider for a recommendation). It is important to ask female clients whether they would like their partner to be invited to speak with the provider, and to make sure that she knows she can access contraception without male participation. In addition to talking to men directly, providers can help women practice how to talk to their male partners about family planning, if they want to do so.
3. Engaging men and boys may require proactively reaching out to men with family planning services. Providers should consider designing family planning spaces so that they are welcoming to men in facilities and in the community setting. Community health workers are well-positioned to provide outreach in community settings. Tailoring messages about family planning to emphasize the important role men and boys can play as both supportive partners and users of contraception is also important.

**You can engage men and boys as partners and users of family planning by considering the different factors that influence men and boys in their family planning decisions, tailoring counseling messages for them, and creating inclusive spaces.** Engaging men and boys should always be anchored in women's preferences and consent.

Below are the answers and an explanation for the statements in this module. The explanations are meant to assist with your understanding of the statements.

**D1. Beliefs about gender, including how men and women should act, can lead to unequal control over family planning decisions.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Different clients will have different beliefs about how men and women should behave within a relationship. As a provider, you should be able to recognize what role individuals play in a relationship and in decision making about family planning. If you are counseling a couple together and there seems to be unequal control, it may be a good idea to separate the couple and counsel them individually to ensure each one is meeting their family planning needs.

**D2. There are ways to include men in family planning without compromising a woman’s choice.**

Good answers for this statement are “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Engaging men and boys can be done in a way that does not reduce women’s own agency to make decisions about family planning. By being aware of the power dynamics between men and women, and cultural beliefs about what it means to be a man or woman, providers can tailor counseling and communication to reinforce a woman’s right to make family planning decisions. Before engaging male partners in counseling, providers should check whether women would like to have them involved. Providers can talk to female clients about strategies they can use to speak with men about reproductive health goals.

**D3. Male partners should also be responsible for family planning by using a method themselves or by providing support to their partner.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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By including men in family planning decisions, both partners can reach their family planning goals. If partners want to delay or prevent pregnancy, educating men on the importance of using contraceptives can help them obtain their method of choice or support their partner in choosing the best method. By educating both partners on the different contraceptive methods, a provider can better counsel them to make the best choice together to reach their family planning goals. Men should be aware that it is not solely the woman’s responsibility to use a contraceptive method.



**D4. In some cases, including men in family planning services can support continued method use.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Research shows when both partners understand contraceptive methods and support each other in the use of a method, continued use is more likely. When men and boys have a better understanding about how contraception works, including side effects, they can better support their partner. For example, they can help their partner cope with side effects and remind them about appointments at the clinic. A gender-competent provider promotes positive male participation in method choice and use, while emphasizing the woman’s right to a free and informed choice. By discussing family planning as a shared responsibility, and encouraging discussions about reproductive health goals between partners, providers can support continued method use.

**D5. I should only invite a woman’s partner to their family planning session if she wants me to.**

Good answers for this statement are “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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A gender-competent provider encourages men’s sexual and reproductive health practices that respect women’s rights and preferences. When engaging men and boys, providers should do so in a way that does not decrease a woman’s voice, choice, and ability to act on her decisions. For these reasons, it is important that providers invite a woman’s male partner to their family planning sessions only when the woman would like them included. Providers should ensure that women do not perceive their ability to obtain contraception to be dependent on their male partner’s participation or approval. Providers should also have the skills to support women to open a dialogue about family planning with their male partners on their own, if they want to do so.

**D6. Family planning should address myths about how method use affects fertility, sexual pleasure, and behavior for women and men.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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A provider should be able to discuss myths surrounding contraceptive use and dispel any incorrect beliefs about how they may impact fertility, sexual pleasure, and behavior. They should be honest and inform the client about any possible side effects of contraceptive methods.

**D7. Men can be users of contraceptive methods themselves—they are not only for women.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Family planning programs have typically targeted information and messaging to women and girls. However, men can use family planning services and methods (e.g., condoms, vasectomy) and support women in their family planning choices. A gender-competent provider can support a male client in talking about his reproductive health goals and can help him find a contraceptive method. Providers should also be able to dispel myths related to contraception, for example that condoms might imply or lead to promiscuity or reduce sensation. A gender-competent provider recognizes men as potential users of family planning by providing men with counseling and information about contraceptive methods, including speaking confidently about vasectomies to clients.

**D8. There is no point to talking to men about family planning unless I have condoms at the clinic.**

Good answers for this statement are “strongly disagree” and “disagree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Condoms are an important family planning and disease prevention method, but not the only method of contraception for men. Even if condoms are not available at a particular clinic, it is important to talk to men and women about condoms for pregnancy and disease prevention, and where to get condoms. In addition, for men who have reached their desired family size, providers can discuss vasectomy as an option (along with tubal ligation for women). Further, men can play an important role in supporting their female partner in contraceptive use when she chooses to use one. Some methods, like the Standard Days Method, requires active cooperation from male partners. A gender-competent provider can equip men and boys with the knowledge they need to support method use (e.g., how the Standard Days Method works). They can also equip men and boys with communication skills to initiate a conversation with their female partners about reproductive health goals and contraceptive use. Through counseling, a provider can reinforce with male clients the importance of maintaining women’s autonomy in decisions about family planning. A gender-competent provider brings up and provides to both male and female clients information about contraceptive methods they can use themselves, and how they can support methods used by their partner. They are prepared to make referrals when contraception is not readily available.

**D9. Men should be aware about all forms of contraception, even though most methods are for women.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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By educating men on the different contraceptive options, providers can help male clients be more informed when choosing a method or supporting their partner when using a method. Men will be better able to respect a woman’s choice if they are educated on the different options and the side effects that come along with them. If they do not understand how the different options affect them or their partner, then they may push for a method that is not right for either of them.

**D10. Holding community dialogues with men about family planning is important to support family planning services.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Speaking to a community together encourages participation and discussion among the participants. A provider can reach a larger segment of the population and educate them on what family planning is and why it is important. A provider can facilitate an open forum and answer the men’s questions about family planning and how they can further support it within their community. These conversations can address community attitudes about contraception. They can also encourage men to view family planning as their responsibility, to seek out family planning services for themselves, and to better support their female partners.

**D11. Talking with male community leaders about family planning is important to support family planning services.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Community and religious leaders have the power to influence their members’ beliefs about family planning services and whether they utilize the services available. Educating leaders on the importance of family planning services can lead to the community also viewing family planning as an important aspect of reproductive and overall health. Providers should feel confident in discussing the services offered and why it is necessary for the leaders to be involved so community members see the importance of the services provided and want to use them.

**D12. In some cases, including men in family planning decisions can improve the couple’s satisfaction with method choice.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Inviting men and boys to be part of the family planning process and equipping them with the skills to talk about reproductive health goals and contraception can strengthen a couple’s satisfaction with the method choice. Increasing men’s and boys’ knowledge about contraceptive methods and how they work can support the selection of a method that meets the personal needs of the couples. Couples who are less worried about unintended pregnancy may have more satisfaction with their sexual relationship and method choice.

**D13. I can counsel male clients about vasectomy as a form of contraception and provide referrals if necessary.**

Good answers for this statement include “strongly agree” and “agree.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Being confident in discussing all contraceptive methods with men is important and a provider should be able to educate and refer clients as necessary. A provider needs to be able explain what a vasectomy is and present it as a viable method, while addressing any misconceptions about the procedure and describing its long-term effects. When a client decides they want a vasectomy, a provider should be able to refer them to where the service can be obtained.

### **Group Discussion/Reflection:**

After reviewing the statements, it is important to reflect on how you can engage men and boys in your provision of family planning services. Below are some questions to discuss with other providers regarding engaging men and boys as partners.

- What are myths and misconceptions you typically encounter when counseling men and boys? How can you address these?
- In your experience, what are the masculine cultural beliefs that influence male family planning clients? How can you counsel male and female clients so that they achieve their reproductive health goals despite these cultural ideas about masculinity?
- What practices can you use to support women’s power in decision making in family planning when engaging men and boys in family planning?
- What can you do to reach men and boys as family planning clients in the clinic and other settings?

The fourth module of the online Gender Competencies for Family Planning Providers e-Learning Course is dedicated to engaging men and boys as partners. The following objectives are addressed in this module:

- Define engaging men and boys as partners and users in family planning;
- Explain the importance of engaging men and boys as partners and users in family planning;
- Identify the competencies of the “Engaging Men and Boys as Partners and Users” domain; and
- Apply the competencies to your work.

Taking this online training will help you develop your understanding of how to promote individual agency among clients as a gender-competent provider and provide a deeper understanding of statements used in this tool.

**Data for Impact**

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

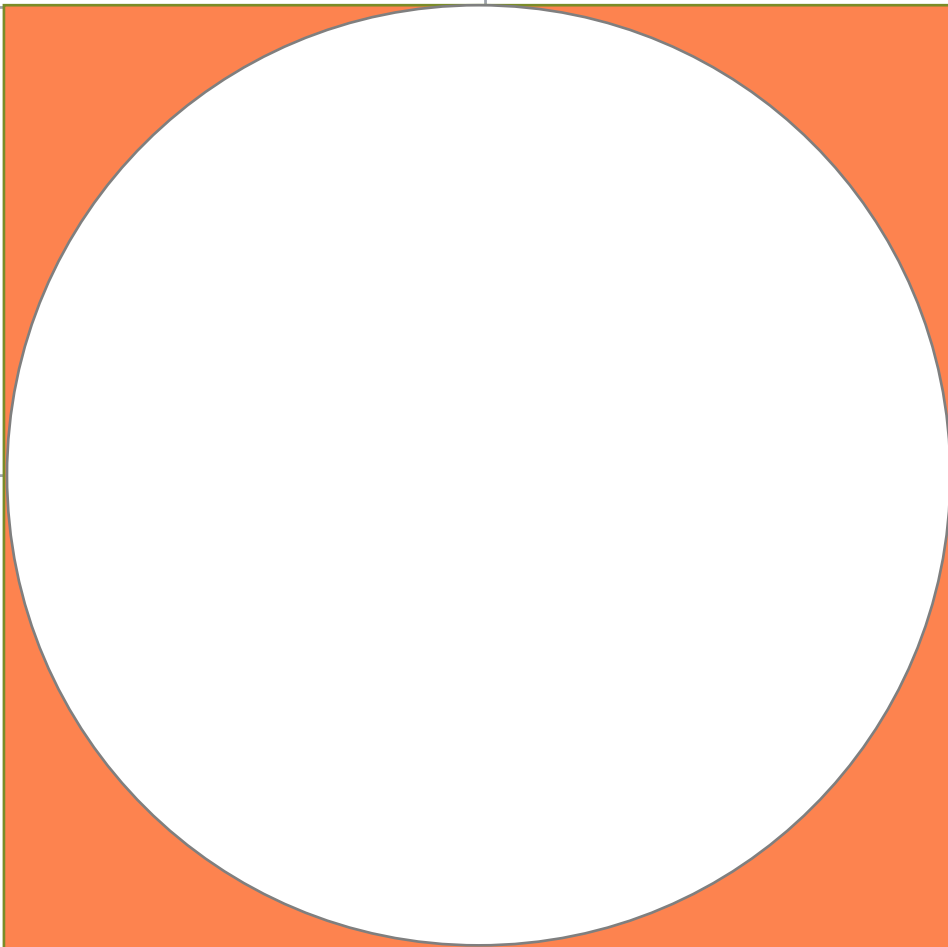
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